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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-13 and 15-19 are now in the application. Claims 1, 2, 9, 15, 16, and 18 have been amended. Claim 14 has been canceled.

More specifically with regard to the amendment, the subject matter of claim 14 has been incorporated into claim 1. In light of the indicated allowability of claim 14, the amended claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 15, 16, and 18 have been adapted to the cancellation of claim 14.

Claim 2 has been amended to correct an obvious clerical error.

Claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form. In light of the indicated allowability thereof, claim 9 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 19 has been added. The new claim is supported in the original specification, namely, in claims 1 and 2, as well as in the drawing figures. The supporting elements are spaced apart (in the direction of travel of the wire or felt band and transversely to the direction of travel) and they form intermediate spaces. The vacuum device suctions off the fluids (i.e., liquid, air) that have been drawn through wire or felt band. The intermediate spaces form flow channels for the suctioning process.

The supporting elements are formed with or of ceramic and they are spaced apart. The spacing distance is defined laterally of the apparatus, i.e., across the rows, and longitudinally. The spaced-apart disposition of the wiping elements is best gleaned from Fig. 3A. The formation of the intermediate spaces provides the advantage that the water can exit the pulp more efficiently and the vacuum below the screen is applied more efficiently, yet the required support is provided for the wire.

The prior art references provide for single or plural scraper bars or drainage foils. These extend over the entire width of the wire. Where more than one such scrapers are provided, they are offset in the travel direction of the screen.

Charlton (US 2,124,028) describes a paper manufacturing apparatus in which a Fourdrinier wire (10) is guided across a vibrator table. A plurality of elements are driven as vertical pistons that impart an oscillatory motion on the wire. The oscillations cause the water to drain through the wire. The water then flows off through a central channel. Charlton states:

> An opening 26 is provided centrally of the unit to permit drainage of water from the paper making wire, the operating parts of the unit being protected by a shield 27.

Charlton, page 2, left-hand column, lines 31-35.

Cofrin (US 1,917,098) describes a paper-making apparatus in which a Fourdrinier wire is guided over a plurality of transverse roll tubes and bars. The bars are provided with raised portions that may, in a very broad reading, be read on spaced-apart supporting elements. The "supporting elements" of the reference, however, are not spaced-apart to form "substantially vertical flow channels for fluids suctioned through the wire or the felt band" and, furthermore, the reference does not even remotely suggest such a configuration.

Van Essen et al. (US 6,780,286 B2) also is representative of the art in which transverse scraper bars strip the bottom of the wire. The scrapers of the reference can be alternatingly raised and lowered to impart on the device the function of an "adjustable activity drainage box."

Finally, Cowan (US 3,922,190) discloses a similar system. The scraper bars apparently extend across the entire width of the wire. The scraper blades, which support the wire and which define dewatering gaps therebetween, are spaced along the travel direction of the wire.

Claim 19, therefore, is patentable over each of the prior art references both under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103.

Further, none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of any of claims 1, 9, and 19. These claims are, therefore, patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claims 1 or 9, they are patentable as well.

A terminal disclaimer with reference to the commonly assigned patent US 6,875,313 B2 is enclosed herewith, together with the required fee.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-13 and 15-19 are solicited.

Should any other fees be required, the Office is authorized to charge the Deposit Account of Lerner Greenberg Stemer LLP, No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

For Applicant(s)

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WHS:bh

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